

REMARKS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection set forth in the above-mentioned Official Action in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 6, 9, 10, 13 and 14 are now pending in the application, with Claims 1, 10, 13 and 14 being independent. Claims 1 and 10 have been amended and Claims 13 and 14 are newly-presented herein. New Claims 13 and 14 are respectively based on Claims 1 and 10, prior to amendment, and incorporating the features of dependent Claim 6. No new matter is believed to have been added.

Claims 1, 6, 9 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,079,809 (Yaegashi et al.) in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0030716 (Watanabe et al.). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Yaegashi et al. is directed to an ink jet recording apparatus and method in which the recording head is cleaned by performing steps of capping, suctioning, wiping and preliminary discharge. In the embodiment of Figure 9, preliminary discharge is performed in the sequence of 1) all the nozzles of an array, 2) just the end nozzles, 3) all the nozzles, 4) the end nozzles, and 5) all the nozzles, for each of the color arrays. In the embodiment of Figure 15, the pressure in an ink tank corresponding to each color array is determined and the required number of predischarges is selected for a color whose negative pressure is minimum as well as for each of the remaining three colors. Suction and wiping

are performed to clean off the ink and then the predischarges are executed for each of the four colors, with the number of predischarges predetermined according to the negative pressure. In the prior response, it was noted that the inks of the different colors were predischarged sequentially, but after a closer reading of Yaegashi et al., sequential ejection is not discussed.

Accordingly, Yaegashi et al. fails to disclose or suggest at least sequentially selecting one of a plurality of ejecting portion rows, selecting another ejecting portion row to perform the preliminary ejection every time a preliminary ejection is completed by the selected ejecting portion row, and in each preliminary ejection for each selected ejecting portion row, carrying out the ejection for all of the ejecting portions arranged in the selected ejecting portion row, as is recited in independent Claims 1 and 10. In particular, in the embodiment of Figure 9 of Yaegashi et al., ejection of only the end nozzles is performed in alternate preliminary ejections, whereas in the embodiment of Figure 15, the plurality of ejecting portion rows are not sequentially selected.

Regarding Claims 13 and 14, Yaegashi et al. does not sequentially select one of the plurality of ejecting portion rows as an ejecting portion row on which an ejecting operation is performed, as noted above.

Thus, Yaegashi et al. fails to disclose or suggest important features of the present invention recited in the independent claims.

Yaegashi et al. also does not disclose or suggest ejecting portion rows arranged in a scanning direction of a carriage. Watanabe et al. was cited for teaching this

feature. However, Watanabe et al. is not believed to remedy the deficiencies of Yaegashi et al. noted above with respect to the independent claims.

Accordingly, independent Claims 1, 10, 13 and 14 are patentable over the citations of record. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 103 rejection are respectfully requested.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the present invention is patentably defined by independent Claims 1, 10, 13 and 14. Dependent Claims 6 and 9 are also allowable, in their own right, for defining features of the present invention in addition to those recited in independent Claim 1. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is requested.

Applicants submit that the present application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejection set forth in the above-noted Office Action, and an early Notice of Allowability are requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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